

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 AGR-10 IGA-01 COME-00

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 5573

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SUBJ: PROGRESS REPORT NO. 5: TITLE II RICE PROGRAM

AFTER THREE WEEKS

1. THIS MESSAGE RECAPITULATES THE PROGRESS OF THE TITLE II RICE PROGRAM DURING THE THREE WEEKS IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN UNDERWAY. SOME OF THE MATERIAL HAS BEEN REPORTED BEFORE, BUT MUCH OF IT RELATES TO NEW ACTIVITIES THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST FEW DAYS OR FURTHER ELABORATES ON ACTIVITIES REPORTED PREVIOUSLY AS IN THE PLANNING OR EARLY TAKE-OFF STAGES.

2. SUMMARY. THE TITLE II RICE PROGRAM HAS GONE THROUGH ITS EARLY ORGANIZATIONAL STAGES, MANY PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND SOLVED, AND COOPERATION AMONG THE VARIOUS AGENCIES CONTINUES ON A HIGH PLANE. IDENTITIES AND LOCATIONS OF NEEDY IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA ARE BEING ADDED DAILY TO ALREADY SIZEABLE LISTS. U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARE EXPANDING THEIR COVERAGE OF THE CITY AT A STEADILY GROWING PACE, REACHING MORE AND MORE OF THE CITY'S CONGESTED SLUM AREAS AND THE PEOPLE WHO RESIDE IN THEM. THE CENSUS OF THE POOR HAS COVERED ABOUT 35 PERCENT OF THE CITY'S GEOGRAPHY; PROGRESS IN THE MORE POPULOUS UNCLASSIFIED

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AREAS IS GOING SLOWLY BUT STEADILY AHEAD. AS THE

RICEDISTRIBUTION PROGRAM CONTINUES ITS UPWARD CLIMB
IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL, WHERE THE OVERWHELMING
PROPORTION OF THE COUNTRY'S REFUGEES AND POOR RESIDE,
ATTENTION CAN BE TURNED TO EXPANDING THE TITLE II RICE
PROGRAM TO INCLUDE THE PROVINCIAL AREAS. THE MAGNITUDE
OF THE PROBLEM IS SMALLER IN THE PROVINCES; HOWEVER,
THE LOGISTICAL SITUATION IS CONSIDERABLY MORE COMPLICATED.
INITIAL COORDINATION HAS BEEN PROMISING AND COOPERATION
AMONG GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE AND U.S. STAFF HAS BEEN OF A
HIGH ORDER. END SUMMARY.

3. THE TITLE II PROGRAM WAS LAUNCHED ON MARCH 4 WITH
AMBASSADOR JOHN GUNTER DEAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE KHMER
GOVERNMENT OF A U.S. GRANT OF 20,000 METRIC TONS OF
RICE FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION TO REFUGEES AND OTHER NEEDY
KHMERS. ON THE SAME DAY, THE AMBASSADOR ASSEMBLED KEY
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, THE DIRECTORS OF THE U.S. VOLUNTARY
AGENCIES -- CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE, WORLD VISION RELIEF
ORGANIZATION, ANJ CARE -- AND U.S. MISSION REPRESENTA-
TIVES TO MAP OUT PLANS FOR RAPID IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PROGRAM. TWO DAYS LATER, THE GO-AHEAD SIGNAL WAS GIVEN
FOR SEVERAL NEW ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO AID THE NEEDY OF PHNOM PENH.

4. DURING THE FIRST FIVE DAYS OF THE PROGRAM, OVER
550 MT OF RICE WERE MOVED DIRECTLY FROM THE SAIGON-
PHNOM PENH AIRLIKT INTO SPECIALLY DESIGNATED TITLE II
WAREHOUSE FACILITIES OPERATED ON BEHALF OF THE KHMER
GOVERNMENT BY THE OFFICE NATIONALE DE COOPERATION
(OFFINACO). USING AUTHORIZATIONS ISSUED BY THE
MINISTRY OF REFUGEES, THE U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS DREW
TITLE II RICE TO MEET THEIR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND
THEIR OWN SCHEDULES OF DISTRIBUTION. THROUGH MARCH 24
A TOTAL OF 1,944 MT OF RICE HAD BEEN PROCESSED INTO THE
TITLE II WAREHOUSE. OVER THE SAME PERIOD, THE VOLUNTARY
AGENCIES PICKED UP OVER 780 MT OF RICE, PRIMARILY FOR
DISTRIBUTION TO REFUGEES AND POOR FAMILIES IN PHNOM PENH
AND IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT PROVINCES. AT THE SAME TIME,
THE AGENCIES WERE USING UP STOCKS OF LOCAL OR TITLE I
RICE, AMOUNTING TO OVER 300 MT, PUCHASED PRIOR TO
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APPROVAL OF THE TITLE II PROGRAM. ALL INDIVIDUAL DISTRIBU-
TIONS OF EITHER TITLE II RICE OR OTHER RICE ON HAND
HAVE BEEN MADE AT THE RATE OF 300 GRAMS (FORMERLY 150
GRAMS) PER PERSON PER DAY.

5. AS THE PROGRAM WAS ENTERING ITS SECOND WEEK, THE
MINISTER OF REFUGEES ASSEMBLED ALL THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES
TO REVIEW THEIR ON GOING AND NEW PROGRAMS AND TO

APPROVE THEIR REVISED ESTIMATES OF RICE REQUIREMENTS TO MEET THEIR EXPANDED ACTIVITIES. A PLAN WAS INTRODUCED AND APPROVED TO DIVIDE PHNOM PENH INTO FOUR SECTORS; EACH VOLUNTARY AGENCY WAS ASSIGNED A SECTOR AND GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR REACHING THE POOR AND NEEDY WITH FREE TITLE II RICE. TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN THE PROGRAM AND MINIMIZE DUPLICATIONS, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES RETAINED THEIR ASSIGNED REFUGEE DISTRIBUTION SITES, CAMPS, PAGODAS, AND CHURCHES, WHEREVER LOCATED IN THE CITY. A REASSESSMENT OF REFUGEE CAMPS, ONCE RATED AS SELF-SUFFICIENT AND THEREFORE DROPPED FROM FREE DISTRIBUTION LISTS, WAS INITIATED IMMEDIATELY FOR POSSIBLE EVIDENCE OF REGRESSION. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE TOLD TO CONTINUE PURCHASES OF LOCAL RICE FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION IN THOSE PROVINCES WHERE STOCKS WERE AVAILABLE.

6. THE NEW ACTIVITIES TO REACH THE POOR VARY IN NATURE AND GENERALLY PARALLEL THE TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. CRS, WELL-EQUIPPED AND ORGANIZED TO CARRY OUT MASS FEEDING, EXPANDED ITS SOUP KITCHEN OPERATIONS AND ADDED COOKED RICE DISTRIBUTIONS IN CONGESTED AND SLUM AREAS. ORPHANAGES, HOSPITALS AND CLINICS WERE ADDED TO CRS ACTIVITIES, PRIMARILY TO OFFER FREE RICE TO FAMILIES OR GUARDIANS. CARE DECIDED TO PROVIDE DRY RICE TO THE FAMILIES OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN A MASS FEEDING PROGRAM OF HIGH NUTRITION NOODLES; THIS COMBINED ACTIVITY IS CONCENTRATED IN THE MORE POPULOUS AREAS OF THE CITY; THE NOODLES TO FEED CHILDREN FROM INFANCY TO SI YEARS OF AGE AND THE RICE FOR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY. WVRO OPERATES THROUGH OUT-PATIENT CLINICAL TREATMENT OF THE SICK, PARTICULARLY THE MAL- AND UNDERNOURISHED, BY DISTRIBUTING WEEKLY RICE ALLOWANCES TO THE PATIENTS' FAMILIES. WVRO ALSO DEVELOPED A PROGRAM TO REACH THE UNCLASSIFIED

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LARGER NUMBER OF WAR WIDOWS RESIDING THROUGHOUT THE CITY. DURING THE IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONAL STAGE OF THE PROGRAM, A PREMIUM WAS PLACED ON COOPERATION AMONG THE AGENCIES AND ALL WERE ENCOURAGED TO FIND AND FEED THE POOR AND NEEDY AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE AND WORRY LATER ABOUT ANY INEVITABLE DUPLICATION THAT MIGHT OCCUR.

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7. THE MUNICIPAL MOBILIZATION STRUCTURE WAS BROUGHT INTO PLAY ON MARCH 14-15, WHEN THE MINISTER OF REFUGEES AND THE GOVERNOR OF PMNOM PENH MET WITH OVER 800 WARD CHIEFS AND ENLISTED THEIR ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING THE NEEDY OF THE CITY. WHILE THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES EXPENDED THEIR ACTIVITIES BASED ON DATA AVAILABLE IN THEIR OWN FILES AND FROM THE REFUGEE, EDUCATION AND HEALTH MINISTRIES, A MORE THOROUGH CANVASS OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA WAS MENDATORY. TEAMS COMPRISED OF WARD CHIEFS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS, VOLUNTARY AGENCY STAFF AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS WOULD GO DOOR-TO-DOOR THROUGHT THE CITY AND REGISTER FAMILIES REQUIRING ASSISTANCE. AS OF MARCH 26, DATA FROM ABOUT 35 PERCENT OF THE CITY'S WARDS, COVERING 31,000 NEEDY FAMILIES IN THOSE WARDS, HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, WHICH WILL CONTACT THE WARD CHIEFS AND ARRANGE RICE DISTRIBUTIONS ON A MONTHLY BASIS. WORK IS GOING SLOWLY IN THE MORE POPULOUS AREAS, WHERE THERE ARE ALSO MORE NEEDY PEOPLE, ANR THE REFUGEE MINISTRY INTENDS TO PASS DATA ON A DAILY BASIS TO THE AGENCIES DURING THE REMAINING PERIOD OF THE CENSUS, WHICH MAY RUN INTO EARLY APRIL.

8. THE U.S. MISSION STAFF CONCENTRATED MOST OF ITS
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ATTENTION DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS ON PROBLEM-SOLVING AND ADJUSTING THE MACHINRY.
THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

COOPERATED BY PRODUCING ADVANCED PICK-UP SCHEDULES FOR USE IN PLANNING WAREHOUSE OPERATIONU. SOME INEVITABLE PAPERWORK SNARLS DEVELOPED ON SUCH MATTERS AS WAREHOUSE RELEASES AND MONTHLY AUTHORIZATIONS. THESE WERE STRAIGHTENED OUT, HOWEVER, WITH LITTLE LOSS OF MOMENTUM.

9. AS THE TITLE II PROGRAM MOVED INTO ITS THIRD WEEK, CRS RESPONDED ON MARCH 19 TO THE NEED FOR REFUGEE RICE IN KOMPONG THOM, USING AIR AMERICA AIRLIFT. CRS ALSO CONTRACTED FOR SOME COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT TO AUGMENT THE INITIAL EFFORT. ON MARCH 21, ARRANGEMENTS WERE WORKED OUT BETWEEN CRS AND WVRO TO USE THE AIR AMERICA PLANES ON ALTERNATE DAYS. THESE TWO AGENCIES SHARE THE RICE DISTRIBUTION LOAD IN KOMPONG THOM AND ARE MAKING THE FREE RICE AVAILABLE TO REFUGEES IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECEIPT FROM THE AIRCRAFT. THE AIR AMERICA LIFT WAS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED ON MARCH 25 DUE TO AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE, BUT WILL BE RESUMED SHORTLY.

10. AMBASSADOR DEAN MET WITH THE CHIEFS OF THE THREE U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ON MARCH 20, PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING THEM TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THEIR PROGRAMS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE EXAMINED WITH THEM THEIR PERSONNEL NEEDS WITH SPECIFIC ATTANTION TO U.S. AND THIRD COUNTRY NATIONAL PERSONNEL. SUBSEQUENT TO THE MEETING, THE AMBASSADOR APPROVED CARE AND WVRO REQUESTS TO ADD SEVERAL PERSONNEL TO THEIR STAFFS IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO CONTINUE THE EXPANSION OF THEIR PROGRAMS. ON THE 21ST AND 22ND, THE ACTING USAID DIRECTOR TOURED CRS AND CARE FEEDING FACILITIES WITH THE HEADS OF THOSE TWO VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS TO SPUR THE FEEDING EFFORT.

11. IN THE EARLY PLANNING STAGES OF THE TITLE II PROGRAM, A DECISION WAS MADE TO SUPPLY THE PROVINCES ADJACENT TO THE GULF OF SIAM AND THOSE ENCLAVE PROVINCES IN THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN PORTIONS OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE PORT CITY OF KOMPONG SOM. THE RATIONALE WAS THAT TITLE I RICE STORED THERE COULD BE CONVERTED TO TITLE II ON THE SPOT AND NOT HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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TO COME FROM THE SAIGON-PHNOM PENH AIRLIFT. FURTHERMORE, COMMERCIAL AIRLINES ARE OPERATING FROM KOMPONG SOM, BUT HAVE SHOWN SOME RELUCTANCE TO RESUME ACTIVITIES AT PHNOM PENH. AND FINALLY, RESUPPLY TO KOMPONG SOM CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED VIA SEA TRANSPORT FROM SAIGON. AFTER SEVERAL MEETINGS IN PHNOM PENH AMONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, PRIVATE FIRMS AND U.S. STAFF, A WORKING GROUP WENT TO KOMPONG SOM ON MARCH 21 AND MET WITH PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS. DETAILS FOR THE TITLE II AIRLIFT, TO BE COORDINATED BY THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF CIVIL AVIATION, WERE WORKED OUT. THESE INCLUDED PROVISION OF

ADEQUATE REFUELING CAPABILITY, TRANSPORT OF RICE FROM TITLE II FACILITY TO AIRLIFT, A RADIO NETWORK AMONG ALL PARTIES, AND SELECTION OF A POSSIBLE ALTERNATE AIRSTRIPE FOR EMERGENCIES.

12. THE TITLE II FACILITY IN KOMPONG SOM IS A CRS WAREHOUSE WITH A CAPACITY FOR ABOUT 800 MT. ON MARCH 23, THE FIRST 500 MT BEGAN MOVING INTO THE WAREHOUSE, WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE UNDER CRS CONTROL IN CONJUNCTION WITH OFFINACO. THE WAREHOUSE STOCK WILL BE REPLENISHED FROM TITLE I RICE STORED IN THE PORT AREA. THE INITIAL TARGET OF THE AIRLIFT IS 50 MT PER DAY. CRS, WVRO AND ICRC WILL DRAW RICE FROM THE WAREHOUSE TO PROVIDE FREE DISTRIBUTIONS TO THE VARIOUS PROVINCES AND ENCLAVES IN WHICH THEY HAVE ACTIVE PROGRAMS.

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